

was chosen as "Best TV Anchor in Las Vegas" by the readers of the Las Vegas Review-Journal six different times, and along with Gary Waddell, received the Best Anchor Team Award in the Women in Communications Electronic Media Awards. She also was inducted into the KLAS-TV Hall of Fame in July 2000.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Paula Francis. Her contributions to KLAS-TV and to Southern Nevada are admirable. I applaud her commitment to Southern Nevada and I thank her for her time and support to our community.

IN HONOR OF VETERANS DAY 2007

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of the veterans who have served so bravely in defense of our freedoms to say thank you for your service. November 11, 1918 marked the day major hostilities during World War I ended, and was subsequently adopted as Veterans Day in the United States. This day now gives us an opportunity to reflect on the many sacrifices made by the Armed Forces throughout our history. As members of Congress continue to address the needs of today's soldiers and veterans, I share these thoughts in honor of those who have fought and died for our country.

Earlier this year, I made my third trip to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where I met with our brave service members who were injured while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Repeatedly, I see the severity of these injuries and I know that properly caring for our returning soldiers demands far more funding than what has been allocated by previous Congresses. Since the beginning of our military engagements in the Middle East, health care for returning service members and veterans has been wholly unsatisfactory.

Under the strong leadership of Democrats, we have begun the process of providing the necessary funding to adequately address the needs of our soldiers and veterans. In May, Congress provided \$5 billion for the health care needs of soldiers returning from the Middle East, including \$1.8 billion for veterans enrolled in VA health care programs. This funding will ensure the Department of Defense and Veterans Administration both have the resources to provide timely and efficient case management services, especially for the young men and women who served in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In March, I supported legislation limiting the number of cases assigned to a physical evaluation officer, in order to ensure the utmost attention to soldiers' needs. This proposal would also encourage accountability by establishing a toll-free number for families to report deficiencies in military medical facilities.

As nearly one in three soldiers admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center presents with traumatic brain injuries (TBI), we will continue to target investments to respond to these most debilitating injuries. I am pleased Congress provided \$900 million specifically for TBI treatment and services to soldiers. Additionally, this year the Senate has proposed \$10 million for the TBI Program, to improve serv-

ices for soldiers' families. I also supported legislation that would establish four VA facilities solely dedicated to rehabilitating and tracking the progress of soldiers with TBI. In honor of the brave men and women who suffer these injuries, I will continue to advocate for increased funding throughout the appropriations process for fiscal year 2008.

Congress must also continue to take a hard look at the current rating systems for disabled veterans, which many have described as disparate, unfair and outdated. Earlier this year, Lt. General James Terry Scott, chair of the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC), expressed concern that the status quo is not meeting the needs of veterans and returning soldiers. The VDBC, and the Dole-Shalala Commission formed by President Bush this year in response to the deplorable conditions at the Walter Reed Annex, both agree that the dual-disability rating system through the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense needs a permanent fix. With the commissions' detailed recommendations in mind, I will work diligently to ensure a system that equitably compensates soldiers with service-connected disabilities, while reducing the red tape that so often compromises the ability for veterans to receive care.

As a representative to the United States Congress for nearly six years now, I have worked tirelessly to represent the interests of the active duty and retired military who call the 13th District home. On this Veterans Day, let us remember our family, friends and neighbors who have proudly worn the uniform. We are forever grateful for their service and we will continue to work persistently to ensure our nation's veterans will want for nothing.

TRIBUTE TO GUNNERY SERGEANT ANGEL BARCENAS, U.S. MARINE CORPS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, the poem below was written by poet and Capitol guide Albert Carey Caswell in honor of Gunnery Sergeant Angel Barcenas from Paramount, California. Gunnery Sgt. Barcenas admirably served our great nation on Marine One during the Clinton and Bush Administrations. In July 2006, he was wounded by an improvised explosive device in Iraq and had both of his legs amputated below the knee. He started walking again 3 months after his attack, crediting the professionals at Walter Reed for his quick recovery. In May 2007, fighting all odds, he led a two-mile motivational run through lower Manhattan with the Marine Corps, and New York firefighters and police. Gunnery Sgt. Barcenas is an American hero whose unwavering sense of duty and dedication should be an example for all Americans. I proudly submit the following into the RECORD.

MARINE ONE

Marine One,
America's Son, . . . A Most Heroic One!
Who so bravely marched off to war, . . . to
do what had to be done!
Terminating Evil . . . as have all of our fine
heroes, long as time begun!

Lock and Load,
A True American Hero, Who So Lives By A
Code . . .
A Marine's, Marine . . . a presence, a force
upon the scene . . . who'll make hearts
explode . . .
So Very Bold!

From That Great Golden State,
As A Hero's Hero . . . our Lord God, would so
create!

Strength In Honor, In awe at what we saw
. . . as we so watch you rebuild, with
but your new gait!

I've got a life to live, for this Angel . . .
Heaven can wait!

Serving, Two Presidents . . .
Aboard Marine One, as has been your most
honored residence . . .

Bringing home a Hero, who gave his fine legs
. . . as you too would live that same
page . . .

And still your courage weights, and has been
getting greater by the day!

Building, from where none lies left . . .
Rising up from the ashes, for no one will
take your dreams . . . for you are,
America's Best!

As into a future, this our world . . . as an
Earth Angel, you shall bless . . .

On the ready, my fine son . . . you never
rest!

As An Angel, here on earth . . . until, on the
scene as an Angel in The Angel of Our
Lord you burst!

Teaching us all, about your fine character
and courage first . . . and of a human
being's true fine worth!

Our True Fine Sum, Thy Kingdom Will Come
. . . Someday, when you leave this
earth.

Someday, you shall shine . . . in our Lord's
Sun!

Until then! Standing Guard, Standing
Strong, Standing Hard . . . for That's
Who You Are!

That's What You Do . . . So Tried And True
. . . As Angel, Your Heart Takes Your
Far!

Walking like Travolta, no walks like you!
Running fast and far . . . A Force, A
Shining Star

On the road of life, where it all begins and
ends . . .

Is the Greatest of all forces, which so burns
bright until times end . . . is but, The
Heart Which sends . . .

As Angel, yours so emanates . . . from deep
down within, your soul is one of great-
ness . . . my fine friend!

For you are my Son, A Marine's Marine . . .
You Are . . . Marine One!

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARY-ELLEN McMULLEN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Mary-Ellen McMullen who has been bestowed the honor of Nevada Alumni Association Alumna of the Year from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Mrs. McMullen has a history as a longtime Nevadan, moving to Reno at the age of 13 with her family. She was immediately exposed to the University of Nevada as her father began his tenure as the dean of the College of Education.

Mary-Ellen was a student in the College of Education majoring in English with a minor in

Journalism. Mrs. McMullen became a model student of student life and involved herself in many activities in order to improve the campus. During her time at UNR, she was active in Student Government and was elected to the Student Senate and then the Activities Board. She met her husband, Sam McMullen during her time on the Senate and Activities Board, while he was serving as Student Body Vice President. Upon graduation the young couple decided to head to our nation's capitol, where Mary-Ellen worked for Senator Howard Cannon and Senator Alan Bible. She worked with the Senators while attending George Washington University to earn a Master's Degree in Women's Studies.

Mary-Ellen was ecstatic to return to the University of Nevada, Reno upon her graduation from Georgetown, to teach alongside Dr. Ann Howard. She has served the university in many diverse facets including acting Assistant Dean of Students, Special School Recruitment Coordinator, and Director of Annual Giving for the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation and Publications/Public Relations Coordinator for the Nevada System of Higher Education. As a volunteer for the university, her activities have included the Alumni Council, where she held the position of first vice president, as well as chairperson of several committees. Today, she continues to serve in her second six-year term as a Trustee of the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mrs. Mary-Ellen McMullen and acknowledge her award as the Nevada Alumni Association Alumna of the Year. Her self-dedication to the university and commitment in bringing quality education to the people of Nevada should be applauded by all. I would like to congratulate her for her award and look forward in seeing her future accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN OAS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Benjamin Oas, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 9, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ben has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the years Ben has been involved in Scouting, he has earned 26 merit badges and held numerous leadership positions, serving as Patrol Leader, Chaplain's Aide, and Quartermaster. Ben is also a Warrior in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say.

For his Eagle Scout project, Ben constructed a permanent cabinet to be used for storing valuables for the Community Clothes Closet in Warrensburg, MO. Ben has also earned the Ad Altare Dei special award.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Benjamin Oas for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HOUSTON POLICE OFFICERS PATTON AND RAMIREZ RECEIVE THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, being a police officer means dedicating your life to defending and protecting the local community. Great deeds are regularly performed by these brave individuals, who mean the difference between the law and lawlessness. Despite this fact, our lawmen and women rarely ask for any commendation in return for their valor. At the annual Greenspoint-North Houston Chamber of Commerce Law Enforcement Awards, however, some of only the many police officers were applauded.

Recipients of the Distinguished Service award, Officers Genarrow Patton, and Rogelio Ramirez represent the true compassion of those who choose to "protect and serve". Perhaps the most significant evidence towards these lawmen's empathy is not found in highly publicized "old western" circumstances, but in situations where, without hesitation, an innocent life is saved.

When confronted at the Greenspoint Storefront by a frantic couple with an unconscious baby, on the night of February 12, 2007, the officers coordinated response is an example of true heroism. A real life nightmare for the distressed parents; their baby's complexion was purple resulting from its inability to breathe.

Without hesitation, Officer Ramirez immediately began administering CPR to the tiny innocent infant, while Officer Patton called for an ambulance. Because of these selfless individuals, the baby soon began breathing again. Although actions performed in the Greenspoint store front may not have involved detective work, stake outs, or the use of force, to this young child's parents Officers Ramirez and Patton represent true heroes.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO SCOTT FAGAN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Scott Fagan, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 9, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Scott has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the years Scott has been involved in Scouting, he has earned 24 merit badges and held numerous leadership positions, serving as Quartermaster, Librarian, Patrol Leader, and Historian. Scott is also a Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say.

For his Eagle Scout project, Scott renovated the back area of an office building at Elmwood Cemetery in Kansas City, MO that can be used for meetings and socials for the Elmwood Cemetery Society. Scott has also earned the Mile Swim special award.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Scott Fagan for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

2007: DEADLIEST YEAR FOR U.S. TROOPS IN IRAQ

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the 852 men and women of the Armed Forces who have sacrificed their lives in Iraq this year. Tragically, this brings the total number of American troops killed in Iraq to 3,855.

The sobering news that 2007 has been the deadliest for U.S. soldiers in Iraq so far is another reminder of the grave human costs of the President's misguided war strategy. The President's promises that his surge would reduce violence ring hollow, despite the increase in number of troops and the hard work of our men and women on the ground who are fighting in the midst of a civil war. Every month in 2007 has seen more U.S. casualties than the same month in 2006. And with two months left before the New Year, U.S. casualties may far exceed previous years.

This grim milestone shared the headlines with another important headline this morning: According to an ABC News poll, fifty-nine percent of Americans do not think the United States is making significant progress restoring civil order in Iraq. A record six in ten want the level of U.S. forces in Iraq reduced.

Congress must listen to the American people, who want the war in Iraq brought to an end. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to vote against any additional funding for this war until it is tied to a firm date for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

As we continue to debate the best way out of the war in Iraq, I hope that we remember the sacrifices Americans have made in blood and treasure. We must not let this war, and the tragic loss of life, continue.

TRIBUTE TO MLADEN KOJIC

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Mladen Kojic, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 9, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Mladen has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the years Mladen has been involved in Scouting, he has earned 34 merit badges and held numerous leadership positions, serving as Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Librarian, Assistant Patrol Leader, Chaplain's Aide and Quartermaster. Mladen is also a Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say.

For his Eagle Scout project, Mladen poured a concrete slab sidewalk and landing area in